previous years, yearwise;

(c) what steps are being taken to contain the abnormal price rise of edible oils and vanaspati in the market; and

(d) whether Government propose to take measures to contain the rise of price of these items during the coming marriage season July-October when demand will reach at its peak?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) and (b):The wholesale price index for edible oils and vanaspati during last three years ' year-wise alongwith corresponding increase of each Compared to previous years are at Annexure *[See* Appendix CLV, Annexure No. 17]

(c) and (d);The steps taken by the Government include monitoring of prices in respect of edible oils and vanaspati, strict enforcement of provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955, increased supplies of imported oils through PDS, intensification of de-boarding operations and lowering of stock limits of edible oils and vanaspati.

Sending of young children to Gulf countries for camel race

542. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the racket of sending young children to Gulf countries for camel race:

(b) if so, the number of such cases which came to Government - knowledge so far:

(c) the number of persons arrested so far for indulging in such a racket;

(d) whether our embassies in the Gulf countnes are plaving any positive role in preventing such racket: if so. the details of their contribution so far in this regard:

and

(e) what steps are being taken by Government to prevent such inhuman practices?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Eight cases have come to Government's knowledge so far.

(c) The information is being collected.

(d) Indian Embassises in the Gulf countries promptly intervene on receipt of information regarding deployment of children for camel race. Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi helped in repatriation of six children-Two in August, 1989, one in September, 1989 and three in December. 1989.

(e) The agencies concerned with emigration have been alerted to exercise due circumspection in the scrutiny of cases where minor children are sought to be accompanied on a passport before granting the requisite clearance.

Complaints against recruitment agents for non-payment

543. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to steate:

(a) the number of complaints received by Government against recruitment agents regarding non-payment of wages, non-refund of security deposit, etc. during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of complaints probed by the Protector General of Immigrants durirg the above period, year-wise;

(c) the number of cases where many has been recovered by Government from recruitment agents, year-wise;

(d) the number of recruitment agents whose security deposits have been confiscated by Government for non compliance with rules during the last

three years, year-wise; and

(e) the number of complaints pending as on date for disposal?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Payment of the agreed wages is the responsibility of the employers while refund of security deposited is the function of Protector of Emigrants. The recruiting agents, threfore, are not concerned with complaints in this regard.

(b) Question does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) No amount has been recovered by Government from the recruiting agents.

(d) During the year 1989, Bank Guarantees of three recruiting agents were forfeited. No Bank Guarantee of the recruiting agents was forfeited during the years 1987 and 1988.

(e) Question does not arise in view of (a) above.

Late running of the Kerala Express

544. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state;

(a) how many times Kerala Express reached at respective destinations late during the last three years; year-wise and destination-wise;

(b) whether, on 23rd June 1990 Delhi-bound Kerala Express reached late; if so, the details threof;

(e) when the New Delhi Station authorities had made the announcement regarding the late arrival of the said train;

(d) whether correct information regarding the late arrival was made available by enquiry office over telephone; if not the reasons therefore; and

(e) what steps are being taken to run this train in time which connects Kerala's capital with Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Kerala Express reached New Delhi late on 224, 224 and 267 days and at Trivandrum on 189, 186 and 237 days in 1987-88, 1988-89 & 1989-90 respectively.

(b) Kerala Express reached New Delhi late by 2 hours 10 minutes on 23rd June, 1990 mainly on account of heavy detention to the train after passing 'Mathura on account of signalling equipment failure.

(c) Announcements at regular intervals 24 times in all, about late running of this train were made from 1330 hrs. onwards upto the arrival of the train.

(d) The train suffered detention between Mathura Junction and New Delhi at different points and the latest information about its late running was conveyed by the Enquiry office from time to time.

(e) Unavoidable causes like accidents, bad weather including natural calamities like cyclone, heavy rains, miscreant activities and certain equipment failures have been mainly responsible for late running of Kerala Express. Round the clock monitoring is, however, being done to improve its performance as far as possible.

Construction of railway line between Khurdha and Bolangir in Orissa

545. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have re considered the earlier proposal and decided to take up the construction of a railway line between Khurdha and Bolangir via Phulbani in Orissa in order to develop that backward area;

(b) if so, by which year the construction would be taken up; and